

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

CEREAL HARVEST FORECAST, 1947-48

WHEAT	2,350,000 Acres	34,250,000 Bushels	Average	14.57 Bushels
BARLEY	550,000 "	13,700,000 "	"	24.91 "

Reports on their harvest prospects have been received from 2,713 farmers representing nearly 40% of the area sown.

ACREAGES:- The following table shows the total areas under wheat barley and oats for all purposes, i.e. for grain, hay or green fodder for 1930-31 and several later years. It shows also the areas that farmers had intended to sow for season 1947-48 and the areas now estimated to have been sown. This latter area is subdivided under the respective headings of grain, hay and green fodder with comparative figures shown for 1946-47. An additional line shows the areas that are estimated to have failed entirely or were fit only for grazing. These areas have been apportioned between the grain and green fodder areas according to the purpose for which it was estimated they were sown.

		Wheat Acres	Barley Acres	Oats Acres	Total Acres
Total area sown	1930-31	4,507,213	267,369	519,300	5,293,882
	1939-40	2,948,110	558,559	834,793	4,341,462
	1943-44	1,675,778	304,382	563,565	2,543,725
	1944-45	1,850,682	402,700	664,436	2,917,818
	1945-46	2,407,253	479,384	686,128	3,572,765
	1946-47	2,662,150	520,027	485,736	3,667,913
Area intended for	1947-48	2,600,000	575,000	600,000	3,775,000
Now estimated for	1947-48	2,470,000	565,000	550,000	3,585,000
For Grain (a)	1947-48	2,350,000	550,000	360,000	3,260,000
	1946-47	2,518,948	502,005	252,325	3,273,278
For Hay	1947-48	110,000	5,000	145,000	260,000
	1946-47	134,391	3,418	159,681	297,490
Green Fodder (a)	1947-48	10,000	10,000	45,000	65,000
	1946-47	8,811	14,604	73,730	97,145
(a) Failed areas included		45,000	5,000	45,000	95,000

Although the areas sown with wheat decreased practically continuously from 1930-31 (the maximum year) to 1943-44, barley and oats increased until 1939-40 after which they also decreased to 1943-44. Although the areas under wheat decreased from 1930-31 to 1943-44, during the same period the number of sheep increased from 5,980,959 to 10,359,669 and cattle from 218,985 to 414,997, while there were increased plantings of flax, peas, vegetables, barley, oats, etc.

After the fall in acreage to 1943-44, there were fairly substantial increases in the areas sown to wheat barley and oats for 1944-45 and 1945-46 and during those years there were decreases in livestock - principally due to drought losses. In 1946-47 there were further increases for wheat and barley but oats decreased to the lowest acreage since 1932-33 - probably due to the good season for natural feed - while the numbers of cattle and sheep made substantial recovery. Barley areas increased for 1947-48 and wheat (and oats) decreased. The areas harvested for each cereal show that farmers cropped lesser acreages than they intended

RAINFALL etc. 1947 was an abnormal season from the viewpoint of rainfall. During January to March, which three months are prior to the generally understood cereal-growing season, the average rainfall for the agricultural areas was 359 points compared with the 42 years' mean of only 215. The next three months were rather dry, there being only 359 (460) points. The next four months all recorded good falls, the total for July to October being 949 (667) points. November recorded 114 (97) points.

Although seeding was delayed by the dry April-June period, and some areas had to be re-sown, the rains during the balance of the season were so good that prospects became very promising and record - or near record - yields were expected. Rust, however, gradually became more prevalent besides which there have been haydie and takeall in some districts with the result that the crops deteriorated considerably and only 34,250,000 bushels of wheat are now expected. whereas earlier prospects had been for something over 40,000,000 bushels and even up to 45,000,000.

The following table compares rainfall and average wheat yields for the seasons with the highest yields. The yield for 1947-48, specially considering that it was reduced by rust, etc. would seem to indicate that the April-June rains are not so important as the July-October.

Season	April-June points	July-October points	November points	April- November points	Wheat Yield bushels
1942-43	682	799	130	1,611	18.18
1916-17	604	998	195	1,797	16.46
1920-21	609	867	218	1,694	15.80
1939-40	479	621	241	1,341	15.02
1947-48	359	949	114	1,422	14.57
1923-24	665	845	33	1,543	14.29
1937-38	389	617	132	1,138	13.73
Mean 42 years	460	667	97	1,224	10.67

WHEAT:- The estimated yield of 34,250,000 bushels of wheat compares with 27,906,001 in 1946-47 and with an average of 27,994,175 during the previous 10 years. The estimated yield per acre is 14.57 bushels compared with 11.08 in 1946-47.

BARLEY:- The estimated yield is 13,700,000 bushels compared with 8,424,061 in 1946-47 and the ten years' mean of 7,289,119. The average per acre is 24.91 compared with 16.78 in 1946-47. The previous maximum yield was 11,714,002 bushels in 1941-42 and the previous maximum per acre was 24.49 bushels in the same season. Later reports indicate that actual barley yields are exceeding the estimates.

OATS:- It is always difficult to estimate the yield of oats but the total expected yield is 4,750,000 bushels compared with 2,780,364 in 1946-47 and the 10 years' mean of 2,798,873. The average per acre is 13.19 compared with 11.01 in 1946-47. The previous maximum yield was 4,062,541 bushels in 1939-40. The yield per acre of 16.87 bushels in 1915-16 still stands as the record.

HAY:- It is estimated that the acreage cut for hay was:- wheaten 110,000, barley 5,000 and oaten 145,000, a total of 260,000 acres compared with 297,490 the previous season. The estimated yields are wheaten 170,000, barley 5,000 and oaten 190,000 a total of 365,000 tons compared with 379,353 the previous season. These figures exclude meadow, lucerne, etc. hay which usually amount to upwards of 50,000 tons. The average per acre is 1.40, wheaten being 1.55 and oaten 1.31 tons.

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